1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

361 set up outside the line, as at Petats; this is usually a sign of a village which has come under the influence of the white man. The villages are now increasing in size, as the natives are encouraged by the Government to live in larger groups for greater ease of supervision. Probably originally all the hamlets were much smaller than most of them now are, and consisted only of relatives. This still holds good to some extent, but the rule is not invariable, and a family may move out of one hamlet into another. The system of segregation is carried out most rigorously in the mountain districts of central Bougainville, where a few huts, or even a solitary one, will be set in a small clearing on a hill-top, hidden from sight by the thick bush closing in upon it on all sides.

The front of the line of huts is always carefully set in a line, measured by means of a length of fibre, but as they are of different sizes to suit their occupants, the back of the row is irregular. The width is always approximately the same (about 12 ft.). The huts are always set very close together, sometimes not more than a foot or two separating them. This space is sometimes utilized for [824] growing crotons or other plants valued for their colours or for their properties as 'medicine'.

There is no prescribed orientation for the lines of huts. They sometimes run parallel to the coast-line, sometimes at right angles to it. At Kurtatchi the original two lines of huts are in the former position, but the huts that were moved from Gomen were placed parallel to the cliff-edge, i.e. at right angles to the other lines [513] (see plan, p. 586). Since the line of beds is always at right angles to the long axis of the hut, it follows that there is not, as is sometimes the case among primitive people, either a prescribed or a forbidden orientation for sleeping.

361 In most villages there will be one or two huts situated apart
156 from the rest, occupied by people who do not care to mix too much with the others. At Petats there was the primitive shed belonging to the old man Hangunasi (now dead), who did not like the way the Petats people are adopting the customs taught them by the mission. At Kurtatchi, one man, Ora, had placed his hut right away from the village, which he seldom visited and discouraged his family from frequenting. The villagers told me it was because he did not like to live with other people; they considered it very odd, and when I showed them the plan I had drawn of the village, with Ora's hut away at the edge of the paper, it always caused

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

poses—in a dozen or so cleaned-out coco-nut shells. The men come in from the reef, dangling strings of fish, if they have been lucky, or from the bush with a 'possum or two on a pole over their shoulders. Smoke begins to rise from every hut, in preparation for the main meal of the day. This consists for the most part of taro, but it is essential to have a 'relish' of fish, shell-fish, or 'possum, or, in the rare event of a hunter having been successful, a piece of wild pig, if the animal is not required to be kept alive for a forthcoming feast. But either the pigs are very wary, or, which is more likely, the hunter has given less attention to his quarry than to his assignation, for it is not often that he brings home any spoil.

The meal disposed of, the sound of the conch-shell calls the village to evening service. By the time it is over, the sun will have set. There is no twilight in these latitudes, darkness falling a very short time after the sun has disappeared. Fires provide the only illumination, and soon appear dotted about the village, with groups sitting round them chatting and playing with the children. In spite of what may have seemed an uneventful day, they always have plenty to talk about, and they sometimes tease one another unmercifully. If a dance is going on, any one who wishes joins in, and, if the occasion is a ceremonial one, and is sufficiently important, every one, children as well as adults, stays up all night, some always keeping the dance going while others stop to rest, to eat, or to make love, returning to the ranks of the dancers as and when they feel inclined.

If nothing is toward, the village settles down for the night very early, unless there is a moon, when it will resound with gossip and laughter for a long time. It is considered silly to go to bed while the moon shines. Once when I excused myself for leaving the assembled company on the ground that I was sleepy, they laughed, and said: 'This is not the time to go to bed. By and by, when the moon is gone, then you can sleep.'

Thus runs the course of an ordinary day in the life of a Bougainville village. In order to ascertain how the natives spent their time, individually, I kept for a while a daily record of certain of those who lived nearest to me, not, of course, in great detail, but noting what they were doing for the major part of each day. The records vary, naturally, with the character of the individual. Some are much more public-spirited than others, and take a prominent part in most village activities, other arrange their days to suit their own

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

585 put on the platform that was previously prepared in the boy's mother's hut. All the kinsmen of the boy, male and female, who belong to the same clan (that is, all the members of his lineage) go and eat with the young couple, and they can bring in any one they wish, irrespective of clan. They eat all the food that was given them at the girl's village, which the women have brought back with them. The young couple really eat this time, instead of pretending.

Then the married pair lie down together on one bed[1] inside the boy's mother's hut and the marriage is consummated. My informants ended their account by saying: 'The man wants the woman all the time, they have connexion again and again, they go on all the time, they cannot sleep.'

585 184 The account given at Tabut differs somewhat from the preceding one obtained at Kurtatchi. Apart from the details previously mentioned, the ceremony is described as taking place at the boy's village, and after it, all the boy's *waris* go back to their own village, while the girl stays with her husband, and is supposed to cry for her mother—some really cry, some only pretend. When the sun goes down, the young couple are told to go into the boy's mother's hut and eat the taro that they will find there. Not many people are there, only the boy's mother and his grandmother. The boy's grandmother tells the girl: 'Now you must not be ashamed before your husband any more.' Then she tells the boy: 'And you, you must not be ashamed before your wife. You two can sleep together on one bed now, and can eat together out of one basket of taro.' Then the two eat, the boy eats first and the girl after him. They eat a piece of pig and a piece of taro. The boy bites off a piece and then gives the rest to the girl. This is to signify that, in future, when the husband eats, he will not finish all the food, but will leave some for his wife, who must finish it, and the girl must take care to provide the man with plenty of food. 'Then the two lie together and have sexual intercourse, they laugh on the bed, they play with each other and talk, and chew the betel-mixture, they 532 do not sleep.'

184 On the Lontis coast, north-western Buka, when a woman who 565 is *tsunaun* marries and is escorted to her husband's hut—or rather 585 to his mother's hut, where they will live at first, in most instances—

[513]

[1] In the ordinary way man and wife occupy separate planks, with the usual space between for a smouldering fire.

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

people of North Bougainville, who never make them. They are paid for in pots or taro or other goods, to the value of about 3*s.* of our money for a plain hood and 5*s.* or 6*s.* for an ornamented one.

Sleeping Mats

Sleeping mats (*pópolat* in the Petats dialect) are made in exactly the same manner as the hoods, except that they are left as a flat piece, composed of two layers of leaves. They are generally used for lying upon, but sometimes also as a covering on cold nights. I did not see any of these in use in the villages of Bougainville; there the people sleep on bare planks without mats or covering of any sort either above or below them, except for their loin cloths, which they ordinarily retain at night.

Baskets

A basket made of grass is used by the women when they go fishing for tiny fish in the rock pools on the reef at low tide, or collecting shell-fish. They are usually made in pairs, one slightly smaller than the other. The women tie the larger one round their waists, to serve as a storing-place for the catch. The smaller one they hold with one hand in front of holes, between stones, or at other possible hiding-places, and with the other hand they shepherd into it, in a most skilful manner, the fish that come out. I did not see these made, so am unable to describe the process.

At Petats another kind of basket is made for this purpose, and is used also in fishing with the *pilu* (see p. 356). It is circular in shape, very stiff, with an open mesh, and is made of the outside rind of the stem of a plant, trimmed with a black-lip oyster shell into long strips about one-fifth of an inch wide. Both ends of two pieces of these are fixed, one end generally being tucked into the folds of the loin-cloth, the other being held between the toes. The two strips are thus held taut, parallel to each other, their length being that required for the basket. Two pieces are then threaded through, one under both these two straight strips, the other over both. These second strips are then crossed over each other, their ends being left free. Two more are threaded in the same way below them, and every alternate cross-over is tied with a bit of rind. The width of the basket is added to by placing parallel strips on either side of the original two; the free ends of the cross-over pieces are then threaded in the same way over and under

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

768 his property took place, and his widow and children continued to live in the house in which he died.

In other parts of Buka it is still customary to dispose of the dead person's possessions, either by burning or burying, special attention being paid to the section of bamboo which he had used as a pillow. At the village of Tung, on the west coast of Buka, I attended a ceremony the primary object of which was to celebrate the completion of a new 'men's house' at which the opportunity was taken (in accordance with the custom of making the most of any feast that may be happening) to bury the pillow and other belongings of the father of the owner of the 'men's house'. I could not find out when he had died, but one of the younger men remembered seeing him [513] as an old man when he was a child. The pillow (*nuel* in the dialect spoken at Tung, which is very similar to that of Petats) was a length of bamboo about 2 feet long and 4 or 5 inches in diameter. It was placed on the cross-bar of the new 'men's house', wrapped in a very dirty bit of cloth and covered with a woman's hood, with a piece of red cloth hanging in front of it. There it remained till the morning after the conclusion of the ceremony described on p. 389. It would have been buried on the evening of that day, but for the occurrence of a tropical downpour. Early in the morning of the following day, Gonu, the dead man's son, Gonu's wife, and two other women, one of whom stood to him in the relationship called *mataha*, 'sister'—and therefore called the dead man *tama*, 'father'—brought out the pillow, opened out the cloth in which it was wrapped, and put into it some trade beads, an old coat, a dilapidated felt hat (the cherished possession of any native who can acquire one), some much-worn loin-cloths, and some dog's teeth. The pillow itself was cut in half, both halves were wrapped in a new pink loin-cloth, and put into a basket. They then went to the cemetery, inviting me to go with them. A young man who was not, so far as I could ascertain, any relation of the deceased came, too, bringing a yam spade. The dead man's son dug a hole at the head of his father's grave and lined it with a banana leaf. The cloth with its contents, and the pillow in its wrapping, were then laid in the hole, also the woman's hood which had covered it. One of the women, Gonu's *mataha*, set up a loud wailing and turned and walked away. The other women started to weed the grave. When the men had shovelled the earth back with the yam spade, we all returned to the village.